

Remarks

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-150 were pending in the application. Claims 7-50, 57-100, and 107-150 were withdrawn from consideration pursuant to applicants' reply to the restriction requirement of June 1, 2006.

The Examiner objects to the abstract as being defective for not proving a concise state of the technical features of the patent.

Claims 1, 2, 51, 52, 101, and 102 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sloo U.S. Patent No. 5,895,450 (hereinafter "Sloo").

Claims 3, 5, 6, 53, 55, 56, 103, 105, and 106 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sloo in view of Vaidyanathan et al. U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0059596 (hereinafter "Vaidyanathan").

Claims 4, 54, and 104 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sloo in view of Kilibaner U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0161597 (hereinafter "Kilibaner").

Summary Applicants' Reply

Applicants have amended the abstract and claims 1, 4, 5, 51, 54, 55, 101, 104, and 105 to more particularly define the invention. Applicants have also cancelled withdrawn claims 7-50, 57-100, and 107-150, without prejudice. No new matter has been added and the amendments are fully supported by the originally-filed specification.

Reconsideration of this application in light of the following remarks is hereby respectfully requested.

Applicants' Reply to the
Objection to the Abstract

The abstract is objected to as being defective for not proving a concise state of the technical disclosure of the patent. In response, applicants have amended the abstract. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the objection to the abstract be withdrawn.

Applicants' Reply to the Rejection of
Claims 1, 51, and 101 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 51, and 101 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sloo.

Applicants' amended independent claims 1, 51, and 101 are directed toward a method and systems for guiding a user through dispute resolution using a dispute management application. An indication is received from the user to create a profile from a first computer. The profile contains dispute resolution-related information associated with the user. Based at least in part on the profile and in response to the indication, a dispute resolution path containing steps for implementing a dispute resolution mechanism is determined at a second computer. The steps of the determined dispute resolution path are displayed to the user at the first computer and the user is prompted to select the determined dispute resolution path.

Sloo refers to a completely different approach for handling complaints. In particular, Sloo refers to a system whereby anonymous complaints may be lodged by complainants against subjects. The system resolves the dispute through negotiation, a judge/jury, or an automatic judgment system. The user is responsible for selecting a dispute resolution option from preset dispute resolution options without any guidance from the system.

Accordingly, applicants' respectfully submit that Sloo does not show applicants' claimed features of: i) "determining a dispute resolution path for resolving a dispute based at least in part on [a users dispute resolution-related information] profile," ii) "displaying at the first computer the steps of the determined dispute resolution path," or iii) "prompting the user at the first computer to select the determined dispute resolution path."

Thus, at least because Sloo fails to show each feature of applicants' amended independent claims 1, 51, and 101 the rejection over Sloo under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn.

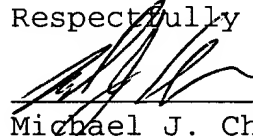
Applicants' Reply to the Rejection of
Claims 2-6, 52-56, and 102-106

The remaining dependent claims all depend from claims that are novel and non-obvious over the prior art. Accordingly, for at least this reason (and applicants reserve the right to argue additional reasons should prosecution continue), the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn (In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988)).

Conclusion

For at least the reasons set forth above, applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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